

Testimony of Angela Rola opposing the consolidation of the  
Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission and other legislative commissions  
into the  
"Commission on Citizen Advocacy"

February 19, 2013

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the committee. I am Angela Rola, Vice Chair of the CT Asian Pacific American Affairs Committee, the founding director of the University of Connecticut's Asian American Cultural Center at the Storrs campus and a resident of the town of Willington for the past 26 years.

I appreciate the opportunity to be before this committee to oppose the consolidation of the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission and other legislative commissions into the "Commission on Citizen Advocacy."

Almost five years ago to this date I testified in this very chamber supporting the establishment of an Asian American Affairs Commission. By the end of that legislative session in 2008 our commission was a reality. Since then the appointed commissioners, staff and interns have worked diligently to apprise the governor's office and the legislators of the unique issues and challenges facing our diverse and growing community. Those of us here tonight in support of keeping this commission distinct will speak of the specific issues that face the APA community in Connecticut. As an educator who has been working with the Asian Pacific American community in this state for the last twenty years, I am well aware of our issues: education, jobs, physical and mental health care, language acquisition, legal access, immigration, small business ownership, discrimination and bullying. As our community continues to grow solutions to those concerns can be most effectively addressed by those who know and understand the diversity of the community.

The voice of 157,000 Connecticut Asian Pacific American residents has finally been recognized by the establishment of the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission. Please vote to keep the present structure so that we can continue to serve the needs of this fast growing population of residents who work in every industry and contribute to the well-being of this great state.

Thank you very much for your time.